

in the Maduro regime have been steps in the right direction, but we must do more. The Venezuelan Government has demonstrated time and time again that they won't do the right thing on their own, so we must continue to apply stronger and stronger pressure. This legislation would strengthen the President's ability to tighten the screws on Maduro and his cronies.

In order for Venezuela to return to peace and prosperity, its democracy must be restored and strengthened. Elections under the Maduro regime have been manipulated and undermined, and it is absolutely essential that next year's Presidential election proceeds freely and fairly.

That is why it is so urgent that we pass this bill into law to empower the State Department to work with our allies and partners and the Venezuelan people to help them take their country back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Florida an additional 1 minute.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Many Venezuelans have fled the chaos in their country to freedom and safety in my congressional district. The significant infusion of our Venezuelan friends and neighbors has affectionately dubbed my hometown of Weston, Florida, as Westonzuela.

We have welcomed them to our community, but we are committed to joining them in the fight for their country and for their friends and family members who remain there in the fight. This legislation is an important step in that battle, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I emphasize again that Venezuela is in crisis and we cannot wait any longer to take action. By passing the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act, we can begin to provide the Venezuelan people with the resources they so desperately need.

But the United States, obviously, cannot do this alone. Sustained leadership is needed to address the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela from the U.N. Secretary General, members of the Security Council, and other international partners.

It is easy to talk about another country in the abstract, but these are human beings who are dying and sick. They are human beings just like us, and it behooves us to make sure that, while we condemn the brutality of the regime that has a stranglehold on that country, we feel only sympathy for the people. That is what this bill tries to address.

So I again urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I want to again commend my partner from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN,

who has done so much work with me through the years, and our chairman, ED ROYCE, whom it has been a real pleasure to work with.

This is another example of important bipartisan legislation that comes out of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I think that we set a dialogue and a blueprint for people coming together and working together. I think that is what the American people want to see.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues—Mr. ENGEL, the author, and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, the cosponsor of this measure—for their leadership and for bringing the bill here to the floor.

The world has watched with great sadness as President Maduro continues to run his country into the ground, denying his citizens access to basic food and denying them access to medicine. His obsession with consolidating power has resulted in Venezuela's economic collapse, and it is a collapse created by his wrongheaded populist and socialist mismanagement that has left his country in dire economic straits.

Even more disturbing to me is that Maduro's lieutenants continue lining their pockets while Venezuelan citizens go without food and medicine. This bill reiterates this body's support for the people of Venezuela by instructing relevant U.S. agencies to develop a strategy to address their immediate humanitarian needs, while supporting democracy and human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2658, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING CONCERN AND CONDEMNATION OVER THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 259) expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 259

Whereas in Venezuela, President Nicolas Maduro controls the Presidency, a majority of the municipalities, the Supreme Court, the military leadership, and the leadership of *Petróleos de Venezuela* (PDVSA), and has gutted the National Assembly of the power it constitutionally holds;

Whereas in late October 2016, Venezuela's state courts and National Electoral Council, which are comprised of political allies of President Maduro, halted efforts to hold a referendum pursuant to provisions of the Venezuelan constitution to recall President Maduro, thereby denying the Venezuelan people the ability to pursue a democratic solution to Venezuela's crisis;

Whereas Venezuela's National Electoral Council postponed elections for governors and mayors scheduled for December 2016 and has not set a date to reschedule these elections;

Whereas there have been several attempts at dialogue between President Maduro and the opposition over the past year, which have all failed to yield tangible results;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela continues to silence its citizens through political arrests, with more than 444 political prisoners currently in jail;

Whereas Joshua Holt, a United States citizen, remains imprisoned in Venezuela with no due process, and four postponed hearings to date;

Whereas in its 2016 report, Venezuela's Violence Observatory assessed a widespread use of firearms by criminals and increased use of violence by police and military officials, contributing to a homicide rate of 91.8 per 100,000 residents, making Venezuela one of the most violent countries in the world;

Whereas police and military raids have led to widespread allegations of human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, mass arbitrary detentions, torture, forced evictions, and arbitrary deportations;

Whereas Venezuela is immersed in a deep economic crisis, with shortages of basic food supplies and medicines, and inflation estimated to top roughly 1,600 percent in 2017, according to the International Monetary Fund;

Whereas the Venezuelan military controls the production and distribution of basic food supplies, which has enabled corruption, fraud, and food trafficking, and exacerbated shortages throughout the country;

Whereas deteriorating conditions in health care persist, with the World Health Organization estimating that there are shortages of 75 percent of necessary medications and medical supplies, up from 55 percent in 2014 and 67 percent in 2015;

Whereas a recent survey – conducted jointly by the Central University of Venezuela, the Andrés Bello Catholic University and the Simón Bolívar University – found that almost 75 percent of Venezuelans lost an average of at least 19 pounds in 2016 as a result of a lack of proper nutrition amidst the country's economic crisis;

Whereas the country is facing increasing outbreaks of previously eradicated diseases, such as malaria and diphtheria;

Whereas the Health Ministry in Venezuela published an epidemiological bulletin in May 2017 (the first since 2015), showing a 30 percent increase in infant mortality, a 66 percent rise in maternal mortality, and a 76 percent increase in malaria cases;

Whereas the deteriorating conditions in Venezuela have prompted tens of thousands

of Venezuelans to flee to countries throughout the Western Hemisphere, including Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Perú, and the United States, which threatens a wider refugee crisis in the region;

Whereas there were 18,000 asylum requests from Venezuelans seeking to enter the United States in 2016, which according to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services was the highest number of requests made by any nationality last year;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela has regulated and reduced the number of local and international media outlets with opposing views, including CNN en Español following its broadcast of a report alleging that Vice President Tareck El Aissami was directly linked to a ring of fraudulent Venezuelan passports provided to foreigners including known members of the terrorist organization Hezbollah;

Whereas, on February 13, 2017, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control designated Venezuela's Vice President Tareck Zaidan El Aissami Maddah as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act for playing a significant role in international narcotics trafficking, and imposed sanctions on Mr. El Aissami and froze his assets in the United States;

Whereas, on March 23, 2017, fourteen Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) published a joint statement calling for the Government of Venezuela to hold elections, restore the constitutional powers of the National Assembly, and release political prisoners;

Whereas, on March 28, 2017, the OAS Permanent Council agreed by a vote of 20 in favor, 11 against, 2 abstentions, and 1 absent/nonvoting Member States to move forward in discussing the situation in Venezuela;

Whereas, on March 28, 2017, the Supreme Court of Venezuela stripped opposition leaders of the National Assembly of their parliamentary immunity and began to take steps to consider prosecuting them for treason;

Whereas, on March 29, 2017, the Venezuelan Supreme Court seized power from the democratically elected National Assembly and nullified the legislative branch's ability to function;

Whereas, on March 31, 2017, in the first major break of a sitting Venezuelan public official, Venezuelan Attorney General Luisa Ortega Díaz affirmed the Supreme Court's actions "had broken constitutional order";

Whereas, on March 31, 2017, Venezuelan citizens took to the streets protesting the Supreme Court's breach of power;

Whereas, on April 1, 2017, the Supreme Court reversed its earlier decisions taking over the National Assembly's legislative powers and stripping the legislators of their parliamentary immunity;

Whereas, on April 26, 2017, the Government of Venezuela announced its intent to withdraw from the OAS;

Whereas on May 1, 2017, President Maduro announced a national vote to create a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the Venezuelan Constitution of 1999, which OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro stated (in testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate on July 19, 2017) was "imposed by decree without the people and against the people, setting the will of the dictatorship above the popular will expressed through universal and direct vote";

Whereas, on May 2, 2017, the Department of State stated, "We have deep concerns about the motivation for this constituent assembly, which overrides the will of the Venezuelan people and further erodes Venezuelan democracy";

Whereas peaceful protests by Venezuelan citizens since March of 2017 have been met with violence from Venezuelan authorities that has caused 100 deaths;

Whereas, on May 17, 2017, the United Nations Security Council met to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela;

Whereas, on May 18, 2017, the Department of the Treasury announced United States sanctions against eight Venezuelan Government officials, all members of Venezuela's Supreme Court, pursuant to Executive Order 13692, for their responsibility in issuing a number of rulings that "interfere with or limit the National Assembly's authority" and that "limit the ability of the National Assembly to conduct its constitutional duties";

Whereas, on May 23, 2017, President Maduro signed a document formally establishing the terms for electing members of a Constituent Assembly, presenting the proposed body as a way to rewrite the Constitution;

Whereas, on June 2, 2017, President Maduro pledged to hold a referendum on the proposed new constitution;

Whereas, on June 20, 2017, the OAS General Assembly meeting was held in Cancun, Mexico, where a resolution regarding the precarious situation in Venezuela failed to gain the votes needed for passage;

Whereas Venezuela's Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz is being legally pursued for defying President Maduro, with the Supreme Court banning her from leaving the country and freezing her assets;

Whereas, on July 8, 2017, opposition leader Leopoldo López was released from prison but remains under house arrest;

Whereas, on July 16, 2017, more than seven million people cast votes in a popular consultation to reject the Constituent Assembly;

Whereas, on July 19, 2017, Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, issued a third report on the crisis in Venezuela which documented the violations of the constitution and systemic violations of human rights by the Government of Venezuela and calling for the immediate suspension of the Constituent Assembly, the cessation of violent repression, the opening of a channel for humanitarian assistance, and the release of political prisoners;

Whereas, on July 20, 2017, the government-controlled Venezuelan Supreme Court annulled the process of the appointment of judges by the opposition-controlled National Assembly;

Whereas, on July 30, 2017, the Government of Venezuela convened the Constituent Assembly, which, on August 18, 2017, assumed lawmaking powers to supersede Venezuela's legitimate National Assembly; and

Whereas the Constituent Assembly voted to remove Luisa Ortega Diaz from her position of Attorney General on August 5, 2017, and to replace her with Tarek William Saab, who was sanctioned by the United States Department of the Treasury on July 26, 2017, along with 12 other current and former senior officials of the Government of Venezuela: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the Government of Venezuela to heed the calls of the international community without delay to hold free, fair, and open elections, release all political prisoners, including United States citizens, respect the constitutional rights of the National Assembly, and open a channel for international humanitarian assistance and medicines;

(2) urges Organization of American States (OAS) Member States to continue all efforts to support the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, regardless of Ven-

ezuela's intent to withdraw from the OAS, and continue calls for the Government of Venezuela to hold free and fair elections and release all political prisoners in a timely manner;

(3) recognizes the strong leadership of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro in building a coalition of OAS Member States in support of democracy and human rights for the Venezuelan people; and

(4) encourages the President of the United States to prioritize a resolution to the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and an effective response to the growing regional refugee crisis that is emanating from Venezuela, through multilateral cooperation with partners at the OAS and United Nations, and through targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for the deterioration of democratic institutions and the rule of law in Venezuela.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection. C

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Congressman DESANTIS for his work on this resolution.

The world has watched as Venezuela's economy has nearly collapsed, bringing about a humanitarian crisis on top of the existing political crisis that we see there. Maduro's decision to sideline the democratically elected National Assembly by forming a so-called constituent assembly made up of his lieutenants has cemented Venezuela as a full-fledged dictatorship.

The administration made clear through a combination of sanctions and regional engagement that Maduro's violation of Venezuela's constitution continues to destabilize not just Venezuela, but it is destabilizing this entire region. And the sanctions also made clear that the Maduro regime's corruption and involvement in drug trafficking is known and will not be tolerated.

Venezuela's once prosperous economy is isolated and is suffering record-high inflation rates. The humanitarian crisis, fueled by shortages of food and shortages of medicine, has resulted in the resurgence of diseases and a big increase in infant mortality. All of this has led to even more unrest, fueling the potential of another major migration crisis right here in the Western Hemisphere.

The destabilizing effect of the Maduro regime must end. The resumption of talks this week between the opposition and the Maduro regime cannot

be just another way for the regime to buy time. The international community, regional leaders, and this body must be united in our insistence that Maduro take seriously the need for resolution of this serious political and humanitarian crisis.

Passage of this measure will send a strong, bipartisan message that Congress stands with the Venezuelan people and that Congress stands in favor of democracy and transparency and against corruption and against human rights violations.

This resolution calls on regional leaders and the Organization of American States to continue to pressure Maduro to release political prisoners, to dissolve the unconstitutional constituent assembly, and, most importantly, to schedule fair and transparent elections now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Let me start by thanking the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE of California, for his leadership and for moving a second measure forward today on the crisis in Venezuela.

I also thank Mr. DESANTIS for authorizing this resolution, which expresses deep concern about the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

I again thank ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the gentlewoman from Florida, who is really our leader when it comes to things in the Western Hemisphere.

Let me just say that, when the Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro, chose to move forward with a sham constituent assembly election in July, as far as I am concerned, he took the final step in making his country a full-blown dictatorship. The majority of Venezuelans stayed clear of polling stations and chose not to participate in what was yet another effort from that government to distract from the country's real problem, which, as we have been saying, is a humanitarian crisis created by President Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chavez, an increasingly dangerous human rights climate.

Just last week, the Venezuelan human rights group, Foro Penal, joined Human Rights Watch in releasing a report documenting abuses in the country that have taken place over the past year. I would like to mention a few statistics from this report that shows you just how repressive the Venezuelan Government has become.

Fifty-four hundred people have been detained in relation to antigovernment protests in early April; 3,900 of them are still subject to arbitrary criminal prosecutions and measures that limit their freedoms. And 757 civilians were prosecuted by military courts in violation of both Venezuelan and international law. Even more alarmingly,

124 Venezuelans were killed and 2,000 injured this year while taking part in antigovernment protests.

The Human Rights Watch report states:

In 53 cases involving at least 232 people, detainees were subjected to physical and psychological abuse, with the apparent purpose of either punishing them or forcing them to incriminate themselves or others. In some of these cases, the abuses suffered by the detainees clearly constituted torture. These include electric shocks, severe beatings, being hung in stress positions, sleep deprivation, asphyxiation, and sexual abuse, including, in some cases, rape.

In an August report, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed a similar sentiment pointing to "the existence of a policy to repress political dissent and instill fear in the population to curb demonstrations."

I think it is important to point out that, year after year, Democrats and Republicans have come to the House floor to call attention to the erosion of democracy in Venezuela. As my colleagues have said, Venezuela should be the leader in South America, the most prosperous country in South America, with huge oil reserves. Instead, it is a basket case because of Maduro and because of Chavez.

For many years, it seemed that the United States was an outlier in raising our voices, while many in the hemisphere remained silent. Fortunately, that has changed. Leaders throughout the Americas have been increasingly willing to stand with the people of Venezuela.

It is hard to find a silver lining for Venezuela in such a dark time, but I do hope, from the strong resolve of our friends in Latin America and around the world in rejecting Venezuela's sham constituent assembly and calling out human rights abuses in the country, they will realize that we care about them, that we know what is going on, and that we are not going to let their repressive government sweep things under the rug.

In November, the European Union put in place a wide range of sanctions on Venezuela, including an arms embargo, visa bans, and asset freezes. Our friends in Canada imposed sanctions on human rights violators in the Maduro government, and, on October 26, Canadian Foreign Minister Freeland hosted the Lima Group of Foreign Ministers in Toronto to seek a hemispheric solution to the crisis in Venezuela.

The OAS, the Organization of American States, has also played a critical role in increasing pressure on the Maduro regime, particularly under the leadership of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro.

But we cannot rely on the OAS alone. The United Nations, both with the Security Council and through the Office of the Secretary-General, must do much more to bring attention to Venezuela on the world stage and hold its leaders accountable.

And today, the House of Representatives, here in Washington, goes on

record again underscoring our commitment to the people of Venezuela and condemning the destructive policies of the Maduro regime. With this measure, we are saying enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Mr. DESANTIS for authoring this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and author of this measure.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for moving this through our committee, and I am glad that we are getting a lot of support for this resolution on the House floor today.

President Trump, when he spoke at the U.N. in September, said that "the problem with Venezuela is not that socialism has been poorly implemented, but that it has been faithfully implemented." I think the results speak for themselves. You have a country that is in chaos, that is a basket case, and you have an autocrat doing whatever he can to cling to power.

Think about what is going on in Venezuela:

You have the country with perhaps the largest oil reserves in the world, and yet they have massive fuel shortages;

You have hyperinflation that is over 2,000 percent;

Diseases that we thought had been eradicated, like malaria, are now coming back;

There are massive food shortages such that wide swaths of the population are losing 10 or 15 pounds a year;

And, of course, the Government of Venezuela is very likely to have to default on their debt.

Maduro and his socialist junta are dominating the country. They are oppressing a great many, many people. And, of course, he is aided in this effort by his patron and adviser, Raul Castro, and the Cuban dictatorship. We cannot forget their role in this because they are really central to a lot of what is going on there.

We have been speaking about some of the things Cuba did to our diplomats. That has not been fully resolved to my satisfaction.

So Cuba's role in this is really nefarious. You really have the worst elements of Latin America on display in Venezuela.

I think what this resolution does is it says that this Congress stands foursquare behind the people of Venezuela and their rights and their desires to live in a successful, free, and democratic country; and we do call on the President to continue some of the actions he has taken, some aggressive actions in sanctioning key individuals. We want the Trump administration to clearly be on the side of the people of Venezuela and to make clear that Maduro's failed socialist regime simply cannot continue in this way.

So, please, pass the resolution. What we have done today is just one step,

but I hope the U.S. can do more to aid the people of Venezuela. They are fighting against some tall odds and a lot of power coming down on them, but we have got to do something.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to support this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that we have spent a lot of time talking about Venezuela on the House floor today. I think that is a good thing. I think it is good that people know what is happening in Venezuela, and I think it is good to know that the tyrants in Venezuela know that we know what is happening in Venezuela.

□ 1615

The eyes of the world are watching Venezuela and its government. President Maduro must make a real commitment to free and fair elections and release all political prisoners.

In particular, I would like to note the detention of American citizen Joshua Holt and to urge his immediate release on humanitarian grounds.

I think it is important for us to raise these issues on the House floor, so I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 259.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and one of this body's preeminent experts on the Western Hemisphere.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank our wonderful chairman for yielding me time. I also thank our ranking member, ELIOT ENGEL for his hard work. This committee is a model for other committees in the U.S. House of Representatives. We truly work in a bipartisan manner and it is because of the leadership of Mr. ROYCE and Mr. ENGEL. They set the pace.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill before us, H. Res. 259, by my Florida colleague, Congressman RON DESANTIS, who has been very active in the issue of human rights in our Western Hemisphere. His bill expresses concern and condemnation over the dire political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis that is taking place in Venezuela today. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important resolution. I thank him for his leadership on this issue, on the issue of the lack of freedom and democracy in my native homeland of Cuba, and what he is helping the people of Nicaragua achieve in having separation of powers.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a real problem throughout the hemisphere, and by approving this important measure, which is bipartisan, today, this body will once again demonstrate that we stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and their fight for justice, freedom, and democracy.

These are values that we hold so dearly in our country. We take it for

granted that we live in this great country where we can express our thoughts in this wonderful republic, but in so many places in our very own hemisphere, Mr. Speaker, they don't have that luxury.

Venezuelans have been deprived of these key values of justice, freedom, and democracy for far too long, first at the grip of Hugo Chavez, a failed socialist leader, and now with his handpicked successor, another failure of a man and a leader, Nicolas Maduro.

The Maduro regime has hijacked all democratic institutions in Venezuela. It has run the economy so far into the ground that there is hardly any food or medicine or even basic necessities. Inflation is at an all-time high and people cannot afford their daily life.

The economic situation is in turmoil. It is heading towards an even deeper downward spiral because this regime of Nicolas Maduro is corrupt and is incompetent and they only care about filling their own coffers and staying in power, no matter what. All the while, the people of Venezuela continue to suffer.

But this does not seem to trouble Maduro. It does not seem to trouble his cronies. They are enriching themselves on the suffering of the people of Venezuela. From this illicit activity, like drug trafficking and corruption, they are filling their coffers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, they are even using this humanitarian crisis that they have created to defraud organizations that are looking to bring much-needed food into the country.

This resolution in front of us, Mr. Speaker, is bipartisan and strong. It calls on the administration to support the people of Venezuela, to continue to impose targeted sanctions on those responsible for the destruction of democratic institutions in Venezuela.

This resolution also urges important bodies, like the Organization of American States—and we will have soon a new U.S. Ambassador to that esteemed institution—to support the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. It demands a noncorrupt electoral council, as well as calling for the release of all political prisoners.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. DESANTIS for authoring this resolution. I urge my colleagues to offer their strong support and to join us in sending a unified message to Maduro that his actions will not be allowed to continue without a strong U.S. response.

What is that response, Mr. Speaker?

I call on the administration to use more targeted sanctions. We have sent to the administration a very long list of names. So have Senators RUBIO and MENENDEZ. Mr. SRES, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. ENGEL have joined me.

There are many more people, thugs and cronies of Maduro, who are enriching themselves with the suffering of the Venezuelan people. They want to come to the U.S. We should not extend that courtesy to them. There are consequences to these acts. We will continue to pressure the Maduro regime until democratic order is restored in Venezuela and this grave humanitarian crisis is resolved once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROYCE for the time. I thank Mr. ENGEL; my friend, Mr. Acevedo; and Eric Jacobstein on the Democratic side for their help with this resolution. I most especially thank the author of this resolution, our great Congressman, RON DESANTIS.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me again thank Congressman DESANTIS, Mr. ENGEL, and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for their work on this resolution.

I think it is a heartbreaking situation what is going on in Venezuela today. It is rather astounding that Venezuela sits on the world's largest proven oil reserves, yet here we have a situation where its citizens lack medicine and food at this time.

I think the recent report that 20 percent of the country's medical professionals have fled Venezuela amid the Maduro regime's self-inflicted political, economic, and humanitarian crisis is indicative of the problem. Inflation right now is reaching 720 percent.

Support of this resolution will send a strong unified message that Congress stands with the Venezuelan people, that we call on regional leaders and the entire international community to hold Maduro accountable for this crisis and to release political prisoners and, importantly, to hold elections immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we have before us two pieces of legislation regarding the ongoing humanitarian and political crisis that is occurring in the country of Venezuela, which has been reduced to poverty and near starvation due to the repressive regime of Nicolas Maduro and that of his dictatorial predecessor Hugo Chavez.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. DESANTIS, for introducing H. Res. 259, of which I am an original cosponsor, and to applaud Mr. ENGEL for highlighting the public corruption and threat to democracy in Venezuela via his H.R. 2658, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act.

I also would like to single out the lead Republican cosponsor of that legislation, the gentlewoman from Florida and my friend and colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her work over the years in calling attention to the deplorable human rights situation not only in Venezuela, but also in Cuba, Nicaragua, China and so many countries the world over.

As ILEANA understands so well, it is the ideology of the Left—be it hard core Communism, or the Socialism of Hugo Chavez and

now that of his understudy in oppression, Nicolas Maduro—which has brought suffering to so many people.

The people of Venezuela deserve far better.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 259, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 38, CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-440) on the resolution (H. Res. 645) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 38) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a means by which nonresidents of a State whose residents may carry concealed firearms may also do so in the State, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GRIFFITH (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of family considerations.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 371. An act to make technical changes and other improvements to the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on November 30, 2017, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills:

H.R. 2810. To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4374. To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to authorize additional emergency uses for medical products to reduce deaths and severity of injuries caused by agents of war, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3291. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Claims Procedure for Plans Providing Disability Benefits; 90-Day Delay of Applicability Date (RIN: 1210-AB39) received November 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3292. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — 18-Month Extension of Transition Period and Delay of Applicability Dates; Best Interest Contract Exemption (PTE 2016-01); Class Exemption for Principal Transactions in Certain Assets Between Investment Advice Fiduciaries and Employee Benefit Plans and IRAs (PTE 2016-02); Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24 for Certain Transactions Involving Insurance Agents and Brokers, Pension Consultants, Insurance Companies, and Investment Company Principal Underwriters (PTE 84-24) [Application Number: D-11712; D-11713; D-11850] (ZRIN: 1210-ZA27) received November 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3293. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Senior Community Service Employment Program; Performance Accountability [Docket No.: ETA-2017-0005] (RIN: 1205-AB79) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3294. A letter from the Acting Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of FDA-Approved Products of Oral Solutions Containing Dronabinol [(—)-delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-9-THC)] in Schedule II [Docket No.: DEA-344] received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3295. A letter from the Chief, International Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Section 43.62 Reporting Requirements for U.S. Providers of International Services [IB Docket No.: 17-55] 2016 Biennial Review of Telecommunications Regulations [IB Docket No.: 16-131] received November 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3296. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and

Human Services, transmitting a notification of a discontinuation of service in acting role and a notification of designation of acting officer, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3297. A letter from the Senior Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Department of the Treasury Acquisition Regulations; Tax Check Requirements received November 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3298. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Safe Harbor for Deteriorating Concrete Foundations Caused by the Mineral Pyrrhotite (Rev. Proc. 2017-60) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3299. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2018 Cost-of-Living Adjustments to the Internal Revenue Code Tax Tables and Other Items (Rev. Proc. 2017-58) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3300. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Emergency Import Restrictions Imposed on Archaeological and Ethnological Materials from Libya [CBP Dec. 17-19] (RIN: 1515-AE34) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2897. A bill to authorize the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Director of the National Park Service to enter into cooperative management agreements for the operation, maintenance, and management of units of the National Park System in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-436, Pt. 2). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 4477. A bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System; with an amendment (Rept. 115-437). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3979. A bill to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-438). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GOWDY: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 1132. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a 2-year prohibition on employment in a